



CLARINDA,
A PIOUS COLOURED WOMAN
OF SOUTH CAROLINA,
WHO DIED AT THE AGE OF 102 YEARS.

THE subject of this memoir was brought up in a state of ignorance unworthy of a Christian country, and following the propensities of a corrupt heart, was, by her own confession, "sold under sin," and involved in almost every species of iniquity. For the furtherance of her wicked designs, she learned to play on the violin, and usually on the first day of the week sallied forth with her instrument, in order to draw persons of both sexes together, who, not having the fear of God before their eyes, delighted, like herself, in sinful and pernicious amusements, which keep the soul from God, and the heart from repentance. But even on these occasions she found it difficult to struggle against the Spirit of the Most High.

Often was it sounded in her conscience, "Clarinda, God ought not to be slighted"—"God ought not to be forgotten:" but these monitions were treated with derision, and in the hardness of her heart she would exclaim, "Go, you fool, I do not know God—Go, I do not wish to know him." On one occasion, whilst on her way to a dance, these blasphemous thoughts, in answer to the monitions of conscience, were passing through her mind, and in this frame she reached the place of appointment, and mingled in the gay throng. Whilst participating in the dance, she was seized with fits, and convulsively fell to the ground. From that moment she lost her love of dancing, and no more engaged in this vain amusement. She did not, however, forsake the evil of her ways, but continued her course of wickedness. Thus she went on for about twenty years, when she lost her only child, and was confined for several months by severe illness.

During this period of bodily suffering, her mind was brought under awful convictions for sin: she perceived that the Great Jehovah was a sin-hating and a sin-avenging God, and that he will by no means clear the guilty. She remained in a dis-

tressed state of mind for about three months, and when a little bodily strength was restored, she sought solitary places, where she poured out her soul unto the Lord, and in his own good time He spoke peace to her wounded spirit. One day, being thus engaged in earnest prayer, and looking unto the Lord for deliverance, the evening approached unregarded, her soul was deeply humbled, and the night passed in prayer, whilst rivers of tears (to use her own expressive language) ran down her cheeks, and she ceased not to implore mercy from Him who is able to bind up the broken-hearted. While thus engaged, and all this time ignorant of her Saviour, something whispered to her mind—"Ask in the name of Christ." She queried, "Who is Christ?" and in reply, these passages of Scripture seemed repeated to her—"Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me." "In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also."—"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Being desirous to know whence these impressions proceeded, she was made to believe that they were received through the influence of the Holy Spirit. This remarkable passage was also presented to her mind:—"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." She was likewise reminded of several dreams she had formerly had; in one of which a person appeared to her and led her to a place into which she was permitted to look, where she saw "the spirits of just men made perfect," but was informed she could not enter therein. He then gave her a vial and a candle, telling her to keep the vial clean, and the candle burning till He came. She now saw that the vial was her heart, and the candle the Spirit of the Lord. In narrating this circumstance to a friend, she enlarged instructively on the necessity of keeping the heart, since out of it are the issues of life; adding, the eye sees and the heart lusts after the pleasures and possessions of this world, but the cross of self-denial must be borne—no outside religion will do. She now felt the love of God shed abroad in her heart,—the overwhelming burden of sin was removed, and she received ability to sing the praises of the Lord on the banks of deliverance.

Having been thus permitted to see the desire of her soul, she was anxious to learn more of the divine will, and inquired, like the apostle, "Lord! what wilt thou have me to do?" and like him she was commanded to be a witness of what she had seen and heard. Believing she had a commission given her to preach the Gospel, she began to warn the sinful and licentious, that they must crucify the man of sin, or forever forego the hope of salvation. This raised her a host of enemies, both white and coloured; she underwent for many years cruelty and persecution which could hardly obtain credence. She bore about on her body the visible marks of her faithful allegiance to the Lord Jesus; yet while alluding to

this, tears filled her eyes, and she said with emotion, "I am thankful that I have been found worthy to suffer for my blessed Saviour."

Although living in great poverty, and subsisting at times on casual charity, with health impaired by the sufferings through which she had passed, yet neither promises of protection, accompanied with the offer of the good things of this life, on the one hand, nor the dreadful persecution she endured on the other, could make her relinquish the office of a minister of the Gospel. This office she continued to exercise, holding meetings regularly on the first day of the week, at her own little habitation, where a greater number at times assembled than could be accommodated in the house.

It may be interesting to add some particulars relative to the trial of her faith and the persecution she suffered. One individual in whose neighbourhood she lived, who was much annoyed by hearing her sing and pray, offered, if she would desist, to provide her with a home and the comforts of life; but she replied, she had received a commission to preach the Gospel, and she would preach it as long as she had breath. Several ill-intentioned persons one night surrounded her house, and commanded her to come out to them. This she refused to do. After threatening her for some time, they forced open the door, and having seized their victim, they beat her cruelly, so that her head was deeply indented with the blows she received. At another time she was so much injured that she was left nearly lifeless on the open road, whither she had fled to escape from them; but her unsuccessful efforts increased the rage of her pursuers, and after treating her with the utmost barbarity, they left her. She was found after some time, but so exhausted by the loss of blood, that she was unable to walk, and from the effects of that cruelty she did not recover for years. But it may be said of her, that she joyfully bore persecution for Christ's sake.

A man who lived in the same village, being much incensed at the undaunted manner in which she stood forth as the minister of the meek and crucified Saviour, swore that he would beat her severely if ever he found an opportunity. One evening, as she was walking home on a solitary road, she saw this person riding towards her; she knew of his intentions, and from his character did not doubt that he would execute them. She trembled from head to foot—escape seemed impracticable, and prayer was her only refuge. As he advanced she observed that his handkerchief fell and was wafted by the wind to a little distance; she picked it up—he stopped his horse, and she handed it to him in a submissive manner—he looked at her fiercely for a moment, when his countenance softened—he took it, saying, "Well, Clarinda," and passed on.

She was not able to read a word till her 66th year, but was in the practice of getting persons to read the Holy Scriptures

to her; much of which she retained in her memory with remarkable accuracy. By dint of application she was at length able to read them herself; and those who visited her in advanced life, found her knowledge of the Scriptures, as well as her growth in grace, very surprising.

When she was one hundred years old, and very feeble, she would, if able to get out of bed, on the morning of the first day of the week, discharge what she thought to be her duty, by conversing with and exhorting both the white and coloured people who came to her house, often standing for half an hour at a time. Her zeal was indeed great, and her faith steadfast. She said she often wished she could write, that she might in this way also express her anxiety for the good of souls. Then she would have described more of the exercises of her mind upon the depravity of man by nature and by practice, with the unbounded and redeeming love and mercy of God through Jesus Christ.

The person who gives the account of Clarinda's death, says, "I was prevented seeing her often in her last moments; when I did she was always the same: her one theme the love of God to poor sinners, which was always her style of speaking. One day, as I sat by her bedside, she said to me, "Do you think I am a Christian?"—"Yes," I answered, "I do believe you are a Christian."—"I have tried to be," she replied, "but now that I suffer in my body, when I think what an unprofitable servant I have been, I am distressed." She then wept. "You know," I said, "it is not how much we can do, but what we do *sincerely* for the love of Christ, that is acceptable." She seemed comforted, and talked as usual. She showed me much affection when I left her, saying, "I shall not live long, my dear ——," and adding a few other words, blessed me, and bid me pray for her. She had frequently expressed her fears of the bodily sufferings of death, but not accompanied with a dread of eternal death. I asked her when she was ill, if she *now* feared to die. She said "No: this fear was taken away sometime previous to my illness."

She requested that her people, as she called them, might continue to meet at her house; but this was not allowed. I am told they meet sometimes elsewhere, and are called "Clarinda's People." When dying, she told those near her, to follow her *only* as she had followed Christ. Her death occurred in 1832. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bring forth fruit in old age."

While perusing this remarkable account of "a brand plucked from the burning," let those who from their earliest years have enjoyed the inestimable privilege of access to the Sacred Volume, and various other religious means, seriously consider the blessed Saviour's words—"To whom much is given, of him shall be much required."